

When we relax our body and our mind, we automatically exclude the tension that tightens our muscles. This is how relaxation exercise reduces stress and anxiety, and produces a feeling of well being.

Once you've learned how your muscles should feel when they're relaxed, it becomes a matter of practice to bring them into that relaxed state. This process is called self-regulation.

Using the following muscle relaxation technique, you can learn to induce deep muscular relaxation by tensing and releasing tension from various parts of your body one part at a time.

MUSCLE RELAXATION TECHNIQUE

(adapted from Edmund Jacobson)

Please lean back in your chair. Make yourself comfortable. Place both feet flat on the floor. Rest your hands comfortably in your lap. Follow the instructions on your screen.

Begin by stretching your legs as far as they can go...Relax.

Stretch your legs, again. Move your feet up, towards you, hold...turn your feet down, away from you...Hold...Relax.

Now, tighten the muscles in your calves and those in your thighs. Tight. Hold it, hold it...and relax.

Let your legs go back, slowly, down to their original position and relax all the muscles in your feet, all the muscles in your calves, all the muscles in your thighs. Let your leg be completely relaxed. And now, feel that wonderful relaxation coming up from your toes, up your calves and your thighs. Feeling nicely relaxed, very calm...and...very relaxed. Calm and relaxed. Take some time to take your attention away from the screen. Focus on your legs and feel your relaxation.

Now, stretch out your arms. Make two fists, tighten the muscles in your fingers. Feel the tightness...Hold it, hold it...and relax.

Let your arms go down to their resting position. Feel that relaxation. Now stretch your arms again. Tighten the muscles in your wrists, in your lower arms, in your upper arms...Hold it, hold it...And, let go, just let go, let your arms go down to their original position. Stop for a second, and take your time to notice

that quieting feeling of relaxation through your fingers, your hands; through your lower arms, and upper arms. Let your arms go completely limp. Take your time to increase that feeling of relaxation. Very relaxed, very calm, very relaxed and calm.

Now, arch your back backwards, raise your chest. Tighten the muscles in your chest, your abdomen, your back, and your neck. Hold it...hold it...Let go of the tension. Just let go of the tension. Notice your muscle relaxation. Take time to feel the muscles relax in your chest, in your abdomen, in your neck, all over you're back. All your muscles feel nicely relaxed.

Now, tighten the muscles in your face, first the muscles around your forehead, then the muscles around your eyes. Make them tighter. Hold it...hold it...and relax. Now, tighten the muscles of your cheeks, the muscles around your mouth, the muscles of your chin. Make them tighter...Hold it, hold it...and relax. Let all the muscles in your face relax, first the muscles of your chin, then the muscles around your mouth, the muscles of your cheeks, the muscles around your eyes, the muscles of your forehead. Let all the tension drain from your face. Let your chin sag if that feels good. Take your time to enjoy the feeling of relaxation. Very relaxed and very calm. Relaxed and calm.

Now, breathe in through your nose, slowly, and deeply. Breathe the air down into your abdomen first, then your chest, and your throat. Hold it, hold it...and slowly breathe it out through your nose. Feel the relaxation. Breathe in, tense up...Breathe out, relax.

Once again, take a very deep breath, hold it...hold it and slowly let it out. Let go of all your tension, your frustrations, your anxieties, feeling more and more relaxed. Relaxed and calm.

Now, take some time to scan your body. If you notice any tensional spot, take your time to release that tension. Very good, very relaxed.

Now, take time to breathe in and out; stretch your body; focus on your surroundings. Be ready to continue your day. Relaxed and calm. Focused and attentive.

If you would like to learn more about Relaxation, the Counseling Center has a variety of resources to help you. Call or stop by the Counseling Center to make an appointment to talk with a counselor. The Counseling Center is located across from the Lee

Drain Building, next to the Farrington Building. The telephone number is (936) 294-1720.